United Nations A/C.1/71/3

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 November 2016

Original: English

Seventy-first session
First Committee
Agenda item 98 (c)
General and complete disarmament: nuclear disarmament

Letter dated 1 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the attached statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the withdrawal by Belarus of nuclear weapons (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under sub-item (c), "Nuclear disarmament", of agenda item 98, "General and complete disarmament".

(*Signed*) Andrei **Dapkiunas**

16-19415 (E) 091116 091116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 1 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the withdrawal of nuclear weapons by the Republic of Belarus

Twenty years ago, on 26 November 1996, Belarus completed the withdrawal from its territory of the nuclear weapons that remained after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Without any kind of preconditions or reservations, Belarus renounced its military nuclear capability, signalling its commitment to peace and security and, indeed, setting the tone for subsequent nuclear disarmament processes in the post-Soviet space.

Nuclear disarmament is a complex process that entails political and economic consequences and requires significant financial and human resources. Nonetheless, under the complex conditions that prevailed after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine demonstrated their resolve and firm commitment to the objectives of nuclear disarmament. After signing the Lisbon Protocol to the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms in 1992, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine undertook to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear-weapon States, and also became full parties to the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms until the end of its period of operation in December 2009.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Belarus concluded an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency on the application of comprehensive safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. All remaining nuclear material was placed under Agency safeguards.

The withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the territory of Belarus was completed shortly after the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Twenty years ago, with our practical steps for nuclear disarmament, we believed that we were supporting the momentum of disarmament processes, which gave rise in the 1990s to the hope for a safer world. Today, expectations for progress in nuclear disarmament are much more subdued, and hopes are more cautious. A consistent and realistic approach to nuclear disarmament issues remains, in our view, the only possible way to achieve, step by step, tangible progress in building a safer world.